

Nation

IDLE NO MORE The Nation's visit with Theresa Spence

Plus: protest reports from
Victoria Island and Val d'Or

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Building a legacy on a foundation of humanity

by Will Nicholls

I know many of you might expect me to use this space to attack National Post columnist Christie Blatchford for her December 27 piece as full of bull... err horseshit (she's the one who fertilized her prose with "horse manure," after all). But, really, despite her ill-informed assertions and tortured logic, her column – inelegantly and inaccurately titled "Inevitable puffery and horse manure surrounds hunger strike while real Aboriginal problems forgotten" – didn't cast a shadow over the sun for me.

What did cause the clouds to move in on my day was the loss of one of the friends of the Cree Nation. On December 20, Bill Rice died at 63 after battling cancer for many years.

Most Crees know nothing of Bill or the person he was. Way back when geologist Chris Covel took the first soil samples from the toxic mining zones around Oujé-Bougoumou, he passed on the samples to Bill. Normally, analyzing these samples would cost a fortune. But, after testing the first few samples, Bill was in shock. He was so concerned that he decided to donate his laboratory and time for free.

For this, I say thank you, Bill Rice. You will be missed as you have demonstrated the real meaning of humanity, which is something that you practiced and taught. I am sure that your teachings, values and knowledge have been passed on.

This is the true legacy of any human being. The lessons and teaching that were passed during one's lifetime on help to keep that person's spirit alive in the most valuable possible way. Bill Rice had a lot to



William M. Rice
January 26, 1949 to December 20, 2012

give and perhaps the most important thing he gave me was his determination to do what was right because it was right. That is a gift without price.

I thank his wife Kathy and kids William, Robert and Virginia for knowing and sharing such an amazing man.

As for Christie Blatchford, I am sorry she never benefited from knowing someone like Bill Rice. He was someone who could have shown her the best of what a human being is capable of achieving in their lifetime, and who embodied this spirit in his being and actions.

Too often in our political discourse these days we are subjected to a rigid, soulless ideology that only builds a self-righteous shelter of ignorance. While Blatchford continues to build her shelter on a foundation of barely concealed hatred, my hope is that people like Bill Rice will continue to show this world that the concept of right and wrong is a stronger and healthier basis for the way we interact with one another.

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Flash mob at Angrignon Mall

photo by:
Michel Goyette

Losing resolutions

by Sonny Orr



I've been slaving over hot cooked turkey and slobbering over luscious cakes lately and somehow I still managed to lose a few ounces of the fat I have painstakingly gained over the last two decades. I think I lost it during the heavy sweating that happens when you bend over to take cookies and other goodies out of the oven. Then, I somehow managed not to smoke more than twice this year, which makes me rather proud that I made at least 98 per cent on my no-smoking New Year's resolution.

Arrggh... and then there's the resolution for walking around a little more to save a little gasoline and maybe a bit for the environment. That went out the window when the temperature hit 30 below. Watching less television? Naahh, there's too little to do when it's 40 below. Besides, hockey just might come back for at least a dozen games. Go to the gymnasium? No, that's just a bit too much effort. I prefer losing it while sweating over some hot food.

So what's left as far as resolutions go for New Year's?

I tried to stop imbibing the morning after New Year's. Or was it the following

day? For some reason, I can't remember. I know! Stop watching the news channel! Yeah, that ought to do it. Since I'm a confirmed news addict, I think I could do with a little less bad news once in a while. And stop watching the weather network; after all, it's not like you can do anything about it. I guess I'll try cutting back on stressful things like work. Yeah, perhaps that might cut back on much unneeded adrenaline. Perhaps I could perk up on the personal hygiene. Like shower at least once a week or so. I feel – and smell – better already.

I could stop chewing gum (since I don't already, this resolution is even easier to stick to and thus, makes me feel better as a result, so it works). To make this even more demanding, I should say I quit chewing those stop-smoking gums, just to add a little edge to the pangs that I should be trying to eliminate.

Whatever my resolution is for this year, I hereby promise never to make any stupid promise I can't keep, nor try to pretend I'm trying to quit something, when I'm really not trying that hard.

Aargh, who makes up these annual rules anyways?

the Nation is published every two weeks
by Beesum Communications
This paper contains 70% recycled materials

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THANKS TO: Air Creebec**WHERE TO REACH US:****POSTMASTER:**

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SUBSCRIPTIONS**INDIVIDUALS & INSTITUTIONS:**

\$60 PLUS TAXES, US: \$90, ABROAD: \$110

PAYABLE TO BEESUM COMMUNICATIONS

PRINTED BY IMPRIMERIE LEBONFON

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PUBLICATION MAIL #40015005

ISSN #1206-2642

***the Nation* IS A MEMBER OF:**

THE JAMES BAY CREE

COMMUNICATIONS SOCIETY,

CIRCLE OF ABORIGINAL

CONTROLLED PUBLISHERS,

MAGAZINES CANADA

QUEBEC COMMUNITY

NEWSPAPER ASSN.

CANADIAN COMMUNITY

NEWSPAPERS ASSN.

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We acknowledge the financial support of the
Government of Canada through the Canada Periodical
Fund (CPF) for our publishing activities.

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The movement sweeps north

Val d'Or is also 'Idle No More'

By Amy German

news

As the voices of Canada's Indigenous peoples have grown louder since Attawapiskat Chief Theresa Spence began her hunger strike December 11 in opposition to Bill C-45 and other federal government attacks on First Nations, the "Idle No More" movement has rippled across Canada and beyond. Now people in Val d'Or are joining in.

They responded to a call to Natives across the country to gather December 21 to beat their drums, protest and join into the symbolic round dances that have become synonymous with the Idle No More movement.

Making sure that their voices were being heard in Abitibi-Temiscamingue, the Val-d'Or Native Friendship Centre (VDNFC) organized their own protest and round dance on just 24-hours notice.

"We definitely felt compelled to do this because we felt that we just needed to do something in solidarity with all of our brothers and sisters across the country. We feel like we are part of this and so we didn't think twice," said Edith Cloutier, Executive Director of the Friendship Centre.

Despite the short notice, Cloutier said that approximately 50 people, both Natives and non-Natives, came together for the event at noon in coordination with events across the country.

They began with opening prayers led by their Elder and VDNFC President, Oscar Kistabish, who also provided some traditional drumming for the event. Cloutier then explained the purpose of hosting the public event to the participants and local media. The event was capped off by a round dance in the Centre's parking lot.

Due to the heavy amount of traffic on the street where the VDNFC is located at lunchtime, Cloutier said that the event was actually able to drum up a lot of attention in the community. Considering that the Idle No More movement and Chief Spence's hunger strike had not been widely

reported on in the francophone media of the north prior to their demonstration, Cloutier said she was quite pleased with the way the message of the event was heard in the community.

"We also want to show our opposition to the Harper Government's indifference towards First Nations," said Cloutier. "Yes, it started with C-45 and that will have major impacts on the Indian Act itself. This will also restrain some First Nations in their capacities to function and then there is the whole issue of reducing environmental protection for rivers and lakes. The impact that this will

have on the environment should not just concern First Nations but the entire population of Canada."

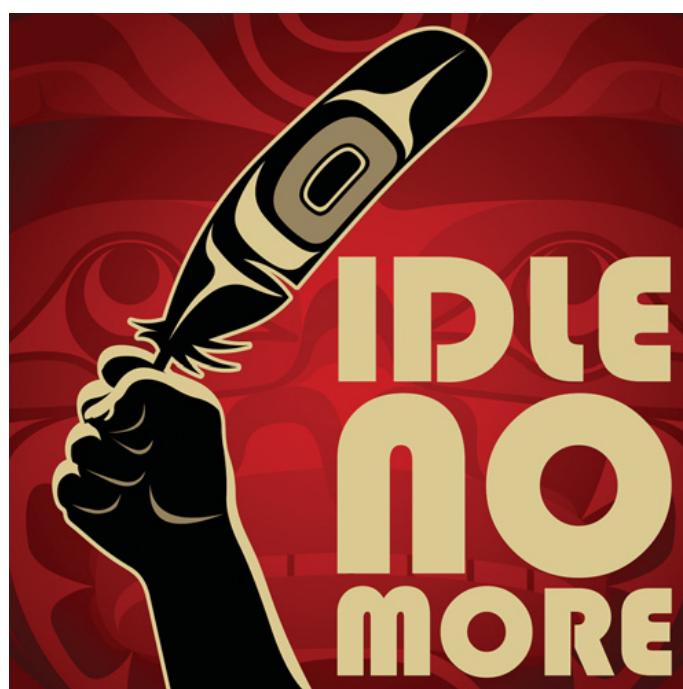
At the same time, Cloutier said that Idle No More has prompted her to delve deeper into the history of the relationship between federal government and Canada's Indigenous peoples so that she could better explain this movement's origins to those who may not understand its purpose.

What Cloutier found was that though it has now been 20 years since Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, it is as though the recommended

reconciliation process was never initiated.

And, despite Harper's promises of rebuilding and entering into a new relationship with First Nations after his government's apology in 2008 for the residential school system, this too has yet to materialize.

"He used words like 'respect' and 'partnership' but we are not seeing this. We keep saying enough is enough and as we stand up as a united front this is becoming more and more interesting to look at throughout this movement. It has been a long time since we have seen this kind of solidarity where we are all committing ourselves as First People to this movement and saying that if we stand together we are stronger," said Cloutier.



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Correspondence from a hospital bed

An ailing Janie Pachano pens a passionate plea for Elders funding

by Amy German

news

Not even a heart attack December 10 could keep Janie Pachano from passionately advocating a fully funded mandate for the Elders of Eeyou Istchee.

Unable to make it to the December 12-13 Grand Council board meeting in Montreal, Pachano, executive director of James Bay Cree Cultural Education Institute, sent a letter in her stead.

"As I lay in my hospital bed after a heart attack on Monday I had plenty of time to consider my own life and mortality. Strangely enough I never once felt fear or had any sense of impending doom. I remember thinking at one point I must be either very brave or a complete idiot," Pachano wrote.

Pachano had planned to attend the Grand Council meeting to present the Cree Regional Council of Elders request for a funding increase.

"The events that led up to my heart attack were very stressful as I knew previous meetings between the Cree Leadership and the Elders had been very disappointing and non-productive. I was wondering what I could say that would convince the Cree Leadership that the wisdom and knowledge of the Elders could make a difference in resolving some of our social challenges today," her letter continued.

Pachano argued that the Elders benefit all of Cree society and are necessary to make the Nation healthy and strong.

"Past requests for adequate funding for the Regional Council of Elders have always been ignored or refused," wrote Pachano. She added the Elders Council has always felt the "future viability of a culture can be measured by the value placed on the Elders and how strong the connection is between the Youth and the Elders."

Previously, Elders' funding had come from non-Cree sources, but the federal government decided that this responsibility should fall under the Crees. The Board of Compensation also funded the Elders for a period but that too ended. The Grand Council of the Crees then provided financing but this was as a result of previously allocated funds under the Paix des Braves.

The Regional Council of the Elders said that any increase in funding would go towards mandates of their own choosing. These would include dealing with community and social issues, an Elders' Council in each community, the transmission of traditional knowledge (including ways of life and medicine), fulfilling their role as keepers of Cree knowledge, customs, traditions, traditional values, history, language, teachings, philosophies, prophecies, legends, healing knowledge, medicines and life and ensuring these are a part of the Cree future in areas such as governance and justice.

To implement this mandate, the Elders Council requested a budget of \$1.4 million. Their submission said, "Many other methods have been tried to deal with the social issues, as an

example, but the most successful ones appear to be those that are land-based and incorporate Cree Culture and values. We need to look back from time to time to see where we are but also learn from the past."

In her letter, Pachano worried this is not happening and that "the connection between the past and the present is weakening." She said the Cree way of life isn't just about hunting, fishing and trapping, but even so, the Cree are neglecting to pass on the traditional and spiritual teachings to the youth. Pachano added the Cree leadership cannot be expected to resolve all of the prob-



Janie Pachano and her cousin Gordon Matthew, preparing to return to Chisasibi from Fort George Island

photo courtesy of Felicity Fanjoy

lems and challenges facing the Cree Nation and thus the Elders are ready to step in. "They merely want to help," she wrote.

Pachano feels the money is available. "I know there are discretionary funds in the millions that could be allocated to the Elders. I suggest that \$1,000,000.00 be taken off the top for the Regional Council of the Elders prior to allocations for other purposes," she insisted. "If we were to total up all the funds that go to outside consultants and lawyers, I am certain that \$1,000,000 would be insignificant by comparison."

In the end, the Council Board allocated \$369,738 to the Elders Council (another \$55,805 was budgeted for the Youth/Elders). Last year, the Board of Compensation allocated \$122,000 but hasn't yet allocated this year's funds. Monies for Elders are also received from the Quebec government at a rate of \$119,000 each year for five years. The Regional Development fund kicked in \$150,000. Overall, the estimated amount allocated to the Elders Council will be \$700,000 to \$750,000.



A surprise encounter

A gift of tobacco to Chief Spence's camp leads to an introduction

by Jesse Staniforth

Two days before Christmas, my girlfriend and I headed over to Ottawa's Victoria Island, where Attawapiskat Chief Theresa Spence had been on hunger strike for 13 days. We had just arrived in town for the holidays, visiting family, and it seemed a rare opportunity to witness one of the most significant moments in recent Aboriginal history. The purpose of our visit was simple: we had brought a package of tobacco to offer to Chief Spence and her people. We wanted to wish whoever we met there good luck and strength, and to let them know there were many others like us who were inspired by the Chief and her struggle.

The purpose of Chief Spence's hunger strike has been widely misrepresented: she is not demanding to speak to Prime Minister Stephen Harper or Governor General David

Johnston herself, but rather asking only that one or both enter into a serious discussion with any Canadian Aboriginal leader or leaders about the resolution of treaties and other significant issues facing First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples.

Chief Spence began her hunger strike just prior to the passage of the Conservative government's controversial omnibus budget bill (C-45). That bill went through despite loud and angry opposition from many sources, not least Aboriginal leaders who say that many of its changes violate a series of treaties across Canada. Meanwhile, a number of other bills are set to cause conflict as Stephen Harper's Conservatives attempt to force a battery of changes in Aboriginal legislation. These include Bill C-27, which mandates that First Nations leaders

make their salaries public, as well as the Safe Drinking Water for First Nations Act and the First Nations Education Act. All create friction by asserting federal government rule over First Nations and their leadership, and few are popular with most people interviewed in Aboriginal media across the country.

In the wake of Bill C-45, we've seen the unexpected but explosive emergence of the Idle No More movement, which has initiated protests across the country and beyond, some taking the form of rail blockades, while many others occurring in the invigorating scenes of round dances and jingle-dress dances in malls across North America. Suddenly, the wide and disparate communities of First Peoples across Turtle Island seem to be finding common cause in recognizing that the Third-

World conditions of Indigenous lands must be addressed. Across a landscape that once belonged to hundreds of Aboriginal Nations, and now upon which two of the wealthiest countries in the world have located themselves, many Indigenous people seem to be deciding that the power to truly begin improving life for Native peoples can only grow stronger if together, we stand united.

Amid the excitement of this historical moment, we picked our way down a snowy hill to Victoria Island. Algonquins, whose ancestors traditionally used it as a portage over the rapids below the Chaudière falls, have occupied the island in the Ottawa River since the 1980s. We were late: it was about 9 pm, but people were still coming and going from the camp. In the dark, we could see the lighted peaks of Parliament in the distance, and a series of Aboriginal flags above the walls of the camp, representing the Mohawk Warriors, the Iroquois Confederacy, the Mi'kmaq Nation Grand Council, the Nishnawbe Aski Nation and the Nishnawbe Aski Nation Veterans.

The camp on Victoria Island was built to resemble a traditional Algonquin village. It's surrounded by walls of rough-hewn boards that have greyed with age. We passed through the doorway into the campsite and took in the surroundings: to our right was the teepee in which Chief Spence has been fasting. Behind it was another tent in which someone told us that other people were fasting (some of whom have not been public with their fasts, but have simply joined in to offer solidarity with the Chief). Straight ahead was the Sacred Fire, and to our immediate left a pile of firewood. Wanting to make ourselves useful, we each gathered enormous armloads to bring closer to the Sacred Fire and Chief Spence's tent.

As we were setting the wood down, a man approached us and introduced himself as Darren. I said I worked for the Nation, but that we hadn't come to write a story, simply to offer some tobacco. He took it and thanked me, saying he would add it to

the smudge the next day. Then he began to talk emotionally and unguardedly about witnessing Chief Spence's experiences after 13 days of subsisting only on water, fish broth, and medicinal teas.

"I don't want to say I have any idea what it feels like," he said. "I couldn't even imagine. Only she knows what it feels like." But it was important to remember, he pointed out, that fasting had a place in Cree history long before contact, as many as a thousand years back or more. He told us that he believed Chief Spence was relying on the long history of her ancestors to give her the strength to carry through, but he added that having so many good people around made it easier. "It's true that laughter really is medicine," he

teepee smelled like wood smoke, beeswax, and spruce. Chief Spence was sitting to our left, close to the stove, smiling warmly at us. When we approached, she extended her hand. Behind her, there was a candle, and a copy of Joseph Boyden's novel *Through Black Spruce*.

We introduced ourselves and each of us thanked the Chief for the example she's setting. I asked if her health was holding up. She admitted she felt weak, but that she had the great strength of many people surrounding her and caring for her. As well, she said, many were coming to the camp to show their support, like we were, and that gave her all the strength she needed.

CHIEF SPENCE WAS SITTING TO OUR LEFT, CLOSE TO THE STOVE, SMILING WARMLY AT US. WHEN WE APPROACHED, SHE EXTENDED HER HAND. BEHIND HER, THERE WAS A CANDLE, AND A COPY OF JOSEPH BOYDEN'S NOVEL *THROUGH BLACK SPRUCE*.

said, "and knowing that people care and support her helps her do what she's doing."

We stood talking a while longer when a young woman approached. We traded introductions, though I couldn't hear her name. Without any warning, she said, "Would you like to meet the Chief?"

My partner and I were overwhelmed. I said, "I really do not want to impose on her in any way, or cause her any kind of trouble or effort."

"It's no trouble," said the woman, leading us to the teepee and pulling aside the flap.

Inside, it was warm and dark. I could see an Elder sitting near the entrance and I greeted him; then we made our way around the woodstove in the centre of the teepee, over spruce boughs (though I couldn't see the floor). There were a couple of electric lights and a few candles. The

She didn't look weak at all: she looked peaceful and relaxed, in good company and in the environment in which so many of her ancestors had existed. The atmosphere in the teepee was calm and soothing: people spoke quietly and firewood sparked in the stove, which radiated a comforting heat. That place no doubt brought her comfort in the cold of an Ottawa winter (a great deal warmer than the coldest days around James Bay). I couldn't imagine a nicer place to be, and I couldn't have felt more honoured than to be invited in to meet her there.

After a minute or two, we thanked her for her time and inspiration and once more wished her strength. Then we headed out of the flap into the cold night. We saw Darren and thanked him, opened the gate and left the camp, both of us thrilled and honoured by our first-hand encounter with history.

Voices from around the Sacred Fire

by Jesse Staniforth

At Attawapiskat Chief Theresa Spence's camp on Ottawa's Victoria Island, the Sacred Fire is at all times surrounded by helpers and people from many Nations who've come to pay their respects. Some stop and quietly make prayers; others hang around telling stories, laughing, or having serious discussions. I returned on December 27 and 29 to interview the people who'd come to join the Sacred Fire. Here, in their own voices, they explain why they've come to Victoria Island, and what they hope will happen as a result of Chief Spence's hunger strike and the emergence of the Idle No More movement.

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DANNY METATAWABIN, OFFICIAL SPOKESPERSON FOR CHIEF SPENCE, MOOSE CREE, ATTAWAPISKAT

This is her 17th day. I arrived the night of the day she started, so I've been here 16 days.

I think based on the support and the prayers we've received, we're extremely happy and doing well. The Chief is not 100% healthy. She's somewhat tired due to not eating solids, but she's drinking water and fish broth, and that helps her.

The momentum is picking up. The support isn't just coming from across Canada. It's gone global. I've even heard word that

embassies or even Members of Parliament are writing letters to the Prime Minister's Office.

Prayers help, and ceremonies help. That's all [people] can do if they can't make it here in person. We're here for one reason only, and that's the reason we're doing this: Chief Theresa Spence is providing hope for grassroots people. We all need to come together and remind our local leadership to work with the grassroots, and to tell the grassroots to work with the local leadership. That's how we're doing this. We're tired of being treated like unworthy people. We want to be just like regular, ordinary citizens, just like Canadian citizens. That's what we're doing this for. We want to ensure our rights are protected. We're doing this for all First Nations communities, whether you live in urban settings or isolated areas. We're doing this for you, and you should be proud and happy that this movement is picking up.

DAVID DELORME, MÉTIS NATION, WINNIPEG

I came all the way from Winnipeg, got here yesterday. There are good people here, and we're here for a good reason, all here to support this woman. We're going to make a change. The change has been happening – young people have been starting to speak up more. I think it's important that people wake up and realize that there's a group of people that live in this country who've been ignored for a long time. We need to respect what they've contributed to society.

FLAT MOSQUITO, MOOSE CREE, MOOSE FACTORY

They call me Flat Mosquito, the one who's with Mosquito Clan. Proud to be Mosquito! From James Bay, where the mosquitoes roam free. I came down from Cochrane, where the polar bears are.

The atmosphere here is good. A lot of good people, with a lot of kind words from each other, and a lot of sharing.

Photo: Nadya Kwandibens / Red Works Studio



Danny Metatawabin, official spokesperson for Chief Spence, Moose Cree, Attawapiskat



David R. Maracle, Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory

DAVID R. MARACLE, TYENDINAGA MOHAWK TERRITORY

I come here [to Ottawa] off and on, and I'm here today just to check in with the status of what's going on, to see the good people at the fires, helping to keep things in order here.

Things in Tyendinaga are going good, and I wanted to be able to report back to the Confederacy. Our Six Nations Confederacy is standing by, on call for whatever needs to be done to help further the cause of our people getting seen and heard properly. We're here to bring good wishes from our Nation too.

It's now a waiting game, and it's making a lot of First Nations people angry, that they have to wait this long, and that

“HARPER DOESN'T REALIZE THAT WHAT HE'S DOING TODAY IS BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER STRONGER, AND STRONGER THAN EVER PEOPLE ARE STANDING UP, SAYING ENOUGH IS ENOUGH.”

DAVID R. MARACLE

someone has to do this to prove that we *have to* do these things, because [the government is] not willing to listen. Once we get ahead on certain things, they stand up and they block it, or they start changing governments so we have to start over again. But I think First Nations people are on to that now, and they're worried.

We have a lot of things happening on our own territory. We have water issues, and I just heard the other day about the toxic waste they've been dumping in different territories. There are a lot of different things that have been swept under the carpet, and the elected-chief system is standing up. They

realize that now they have no other choice. One way or another, they're going to be losing funding and other things.

People are coming together. Harper doesn't realize that what he's doing today is bringing people together stronger, and stronger than ever people are standing up, saying enough is enough.

She's a very strong woman in there to be doing what she's doing. I believe that the men are seeing something with the woman putting her heart on her sleeve. The sincerity behind it is overwhelming and I think the world is paying attention.

THOMAS (ELDER), MOOSE CREE, MOOSE FACTORY

I'm the oskâpêwîs, the helper. Here I'm taking care of the Sacred Fire. I've been here since day one. I wanted to support her.

It's all one family. We take care of each other, and that's how it is. We're all Anishinabe people. A lot of people come and visit and offer their time and prayers here at the Sacred Fire, and that's what it's all about. We stick together.

FRANCES WHISKEYCHAN, EYOUCH FROM COCHRANE, ONTARIO

I know Theresa. I've known her for a while. I've just come to give my support and my prayers to her. It must be five days ago. We live in Cochrane, but my parents originate from Waskaganish. When we heard, we came. Well, he came [referring to her husband, who was sitting beside her], with his sons, who are helpers here.

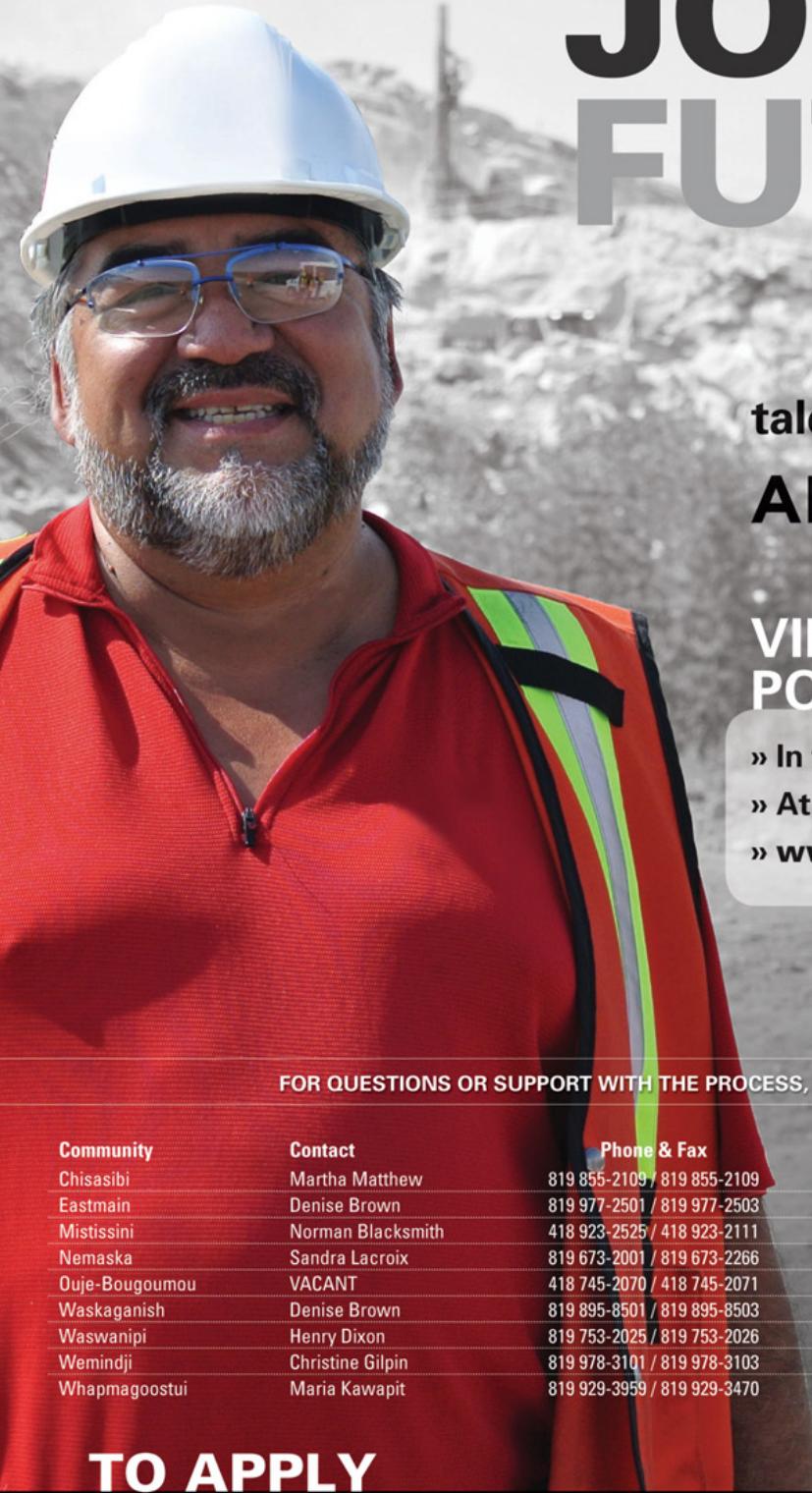


She's very strong, and very high spirited. Lots of prayers for her from all over. I can't speak for her – it's just what I see. But that's where she's getting a lot of her strength – all the prayers and support, the love that's there.

ANGELA ROLETTE, ANISHINABE NATION, PORTAGE LA PRAIRIE, MANITOBA

My daughter lives in Toronto, so I came to see her. I picked her up to come here.

When I hear of a woman that's doing what she's doing, I felt I needed to be here to support her. I brought a gift that I hope



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I can give to her, a sacred cloth that we Anishinabe people use at times like this. I feel that coming here I've done something about what all this is about. I never thought I'd come here. I wanted to, and all of a sudden I'm here.

I'm not an expert, but it's about time. It's really nice to see our supporters all over the planet. It seems like the media can't report everything. For myself, I watch the Winnipeg news, where I live, and we're always dead last on the announcements, and when we are on, we're there 20 seconds. They talk more about the monkeys and the cats and the dogs and the pigs – back where I came from, there was some abuse of pigs and cats, and that's the number-one news there. Then us Indians are in there for a few seconds.

I know the media – who puts the hand on their mouths so they can't report? I was at a demonstration at Highway 1 and Highway 16, on December 15; our people gathered over there, and sure enough the information wasn't accurate. So I thought, once again, there it goes. I saw the CBC packing their stuff and I asked them, "So you guys going to make sure this is going to be on?" There were several hundred people there, and they reported 50.

I once travelled to Australia and I wondered why the Malaysian people knew more about our country than we did. Later I pieced that together. A month after we got back there was an article in the Winnipeg Free Press that said the Canadian government was saying something about the Malaysian government treating a reporter not good, and the Malaysian government responded, "How dare you say that with the way you treat your First Nations, Aboriginal people?" That's when I started thinking, "Hey, yeah! That's something!"

We keep hearing this thing about the grassroots people. I'll say to the women especially, since I'm a woman myself, the women need to gather wherever they are and pray for this woman that's doing this, and also for the good that's going to come out of this. They can do something, wherever they are. I was doing things over there [in Manitoba], and then I had this opportunity to come here. That's what I'd like to say to the people in isolated communities. Get together and get that

energy started, from wherever you are.

PAT ETHERINGTON JR., MOOSE CREE, COCHRANE ONTARIO (ORIGINALLY FROM MOOSE FACTORY)

At first I heard about Theresa's hunger strike – I've known Theresa for a while. She knows my family, my dad, and all them, so I wanted to come support her, any way I could. When I came down here, I was only planning on staying for the day or something, but then I realized that they needed help, maintaining the camp and everything, so that's when I chose to stay. I'll stay 'til the end, too – whatever end that may be, I'm going to be there 'til then.

We keep the fires going, make sure she's protected, that nobody forces their way in. We look after the camp. If firewood needs hauling, or any kind of jobs need to be done, we do it. I'm actually pretty honoured to wear this [red] band I'm wearing on my arm. That's to identify who the helpers are.

I got here on day five of her hunger strike. That's two weeks now. We just set up three new tents. There are 11 of us.



Pat Etherington Jr., Moose Cree

Photo: Patrick Etherington Sr.

I don't know how long this is going to go, but I'm willing to stay until the end. I have a job back home, but I've been in touch with my boss and he's said, "Do what you need to do." It's actually pretty good, and I'm glad, because I told him he could let me go. I'm going to stay here. I got a job, that's money, but I'm pretty sure I could get another one. Right now there's a mine in the area – there's Detour Gold Mine, and there's OPG [Ontario Power Generation]. They're rebuilding a dam and that's a five-year project. They've got an agreement with Moose Cree. I'm Moose Cree, that's how I got in there. But either way I'd be losing that job sooner or later.

The only thing I can say about Harper is that he's playing with fire. And you know what happens when you play with fire – you get burned. Because, pretty soon, if this situation goes south, it's going to be bad. People might get restless. We were talking there – you know these blockades that are going up? They're



Broadcasting Part 1 Applications Open for Comment

The Commission has received the following application: Deadline for submission of interventions/comments: 21 January 2013.

- **Canadian Broadcasting Corporation** – licence amendment to the French-language radio station CBFG-FM – Chisasibi Fort-George, Quebec

For further information, please consult the CRTC website at www.crtc.gc.ca under "Broadcasting proceedings open for comment", Part 1 Applications, 2012-1496-5 or call our toll free number 1-877-249-CRTC.



Canadian Radio-television and
Telecommunications Commission

Demande de la Partie 1 en radiodiffusion en période d'observations ouverte Canada

Le Conseil a été saisi de la demande suivante : Date limite pour le dépôt des interventions/observations : 21 janvier 2013.

- **Société Radio-Canada** – modification de licence pour la station de radio de langue française CBFG-FM – Chisasibi Fort-George (Québec)

Pour de plus amples renseignements, veuillez consulter le site Web du CRTC au www.crtc.gc.ca à la section, « instances de radiodiffusion – Période d'observations ouverte », Demandes Partie 1, 2012-1496-5 ou appelez le numéro sans frais 1-877-249-CRTC.

Conseil de la radiodiffusion et
des télécommunications canadiennes



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Trapping Beaver in the Winter

Told by Elsie Duff, Chisasibi

Translated and transcribed by Brian Webb

Beesum-communications.com/legends

As far as you can remember, did your family move camp almost every day during the winter?

Sometimes we did.

During autumn, we settled down to wait for winter to set in. When the days grew longer after Christmas, this was when people moved their winter camps.

Even if the entire camp did not make the move, sometimes only the man would go off hunting for beaver. The men would move away from the camp hunting for beaver or other game.

One time, my father, my brother Stuart and I moved away from our camp to go hunt for beaver. I had already finished going to residential school. My mother was taking care of my brother David's young children at the time. This was when Ellen was in the hospital.

I suppose this was why my mom didn't go on the move. The children were still very young.

My late father told Stuart and I that we would go away from the camp to hunt beaver. I suppose they had already set their beaver traps before.

We went on our excursion. We eventually reached the place where we'd stay. I wondered why my father did this. I suppose he was teaching us.

We finally reached our new campsite. My dad began shoveling the snow where our lodge was to stand. He asked me if I could build the lodge. I told him that I could.

After he shoveled away the snow, he chopped off branches from the trees that we'd be using for poles around the spot where our lodge would be. After the branches were hacked off, the poles were used to frame the lodge. This way, the lodge frame was made quickly. After doing this, my dad and brother left.

He asked again if I would be able to build the lodge. I answered, "Of course." I began building our lodge by myself.

It was late in the evening. I think they went to go check their traps. They had already set those traps ahead of time.

After building the lodge, I chopped firewood and fetched water. I settled inside the lodge. It was already dark



when I heard them coming. My outside chores were already done. They brought back beaver. I don't know how many.

I think they brought four back. They also brought a porcupine. Fortunately, one of the beaver was not frozen yet. Only the surface of it was frozen. I skinned one of the beaver.

My late mother always cleaned the game animals as soon as they were brought back to camp. In the past, women and girls always got firewood ready to scorch porcupine because porcupine were bountiful back then. I had chopped my porcupine firewood and was ready in case a porcupine had been caught.

I remember that night to be bitterly cold. I told Stuart that I would singe the porcupine that night. I think it was already 11 at night when I began scorching the quills off the porcupine. Our fishnet was also set beneath the ice. I was truly contented doing these tasks. I think Stuart helped me.

I don't know how many days we were out there. I think we stayed there for a week. My father and



brother caught many beaver. We had also set a fishnet beneath the ice.

This was at the end of February. This happened to coincide with Stuart's birthday. His birthday is on February 29.

I would go and check our fishnet too. The fish we caught were huge, some big pike too. We caught all sorts of fish. I went to go check the fishnet on the day Stuart had his birthday. As I checked the fishnet, there was a massive pike caught in the net.

I used to cook their meals too. I decided to cook the pike head for my brother. I wonder why I had done this.

They returned late in the evening. They did bring back more game but I don't remember what it was. I gave him the pike head that I cooked for him. I told him, "Happy Birthday." I had cooked the pike head just for his birthday. I wondered why I hadn't cooked the rest of the pike for him to eat.

He mentioned this to me on his birthday because there is February 29 this year. He called me that morning from LG-2. He asked me if I remembered his birthday. I told him, "Of course I do. Happy birthday." He had mentioned to his wife Jane that he was hoping that I wouldn't cook a pike head for him.

This was how it was for us. I really enjoyed this particular time, even though my mom did not come with us. In the past, women would go off hunting around the camp after they had finished their chores. I would go off looking for porcupine also. There were times when I found porcupine or ptarmigan.

I occasionally reminisce about those days. Today, I am so frail. Those were really good times.

When we moved back to our main camp, I don't know how many beaver we brought back. I stretched and dried some of the pelts myself.

This was what I did.



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How to keep your resolve Turning a resolution into a revolution

by Amy German

Whether you just want to get rid of some extra holiday weight after several weeks of excess or you want to give your life a complete makeover, New Year's Day is the traditional starting point for many people's attempts to better themselves. The problem, however, is that what often begins as an ambitious resolution can fizzle out all too quickly within a few weeks as sometimes a goal can be difficult to achieve, leaving the resolver without the resolve to keep it up.

But there is a way around this, especially if your goal is to be lighter, leaner and healthier, according to Lemon Cree founder and personal trainer/fitness instructor Theresa Ducharme.

Having worked in the fitness industry since 2006, Ducharme says that January and February are peak times for personal trainers and fitness instructors as everyone is trying to lose the weight they put on over the holidays and earlier. Having been through this peak season several times over, she has seen first hand what can work when it comes to changing your personal habits and what doesn't.

If you are looking to make some positive changes for the New Year, Ducharme first recommends looking at what doesn't work.

"Let's say that people on average gain about 10 pounds throughout the holidays and then they want to lose that 10 pounds within two weeks which is just not realistic. So, don't

set up unrealistic goals because you are just going to disappoint yourself," said Ducharme.

When it comes to weight loss, her first recommendation is to be accountable for everything you eat by writing it down in a food journal because, she said, a food journal won't lie.

She went on to explain that food journals can really help because if you don't start writing down what you are eating then it is like walking in the dark because we just don't know what we are doing.

"If I gain 10 pounds over the holidays, realistically for me I can lose it but this is because I know how to do it as fitness specialist. The average person does not however know how to do it," she said.

"The average person will set up these goals, completely fail and then feel really depressed and eat more and this is what we want to avoid. So, it is going to take a little work in the sense of you know, you took the time to eat more and so now take the extra time to write it down what you are putting in your mouth. It is just a little bit of homework."

The next step in battle to lose the holiday bulge is getting mobile, as nothing can help a body feel good like a little bit of exercise.

After weeks of Christmas specials and cookies coupled with comfy couch time, Ducharme recommends getting active in any capacity, even if it is just minimal to start out with.

PENNIES FOR ATTAWAPISKAT

Every year the Canadian government produces approximately 1.5 billion pennies. Every year, that is except for this one. As of this year the Canadian penny will disappear and no longer be produced.

It is my idea to help the penny make a huge difference in First Nations communities. 1.5 billion pennies will provide 10 new playgrounds in northern communities that don't have one and 2 foster homes in Attawapiskat First Nation - keeping the children close to home.

Please help me by collecting and sending your pennies to do one last heroic thing for our First Nations children.

Wes Prankard



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Wes Prankard building playground



"Even if you feel extremely lazy and you've got that extra tire going around the waist, you need to get up, get outside and go to the gym or for a walk. Or, you can stand up if you are at home and start dancing, just so long as you are moving," she insisted.

And, when it comes to activity, picking something you enjoy is as essential as picking the right company for your journey to a healthier you. Ducharme's attitude is that your physical activity shouldn't be something that you despise.

So, if you like don't like the gym, by that rationale, don't shell out the membership fees as there are several other ways to get physical in this day and age. Whether it is walking around the community, dancing to your favourite tunes or challenging your kids to a fit game on the video game system, there are limitless possibilities.

Having a buddy can also really help the process along.

"It is really necessary is to get support. Get together with a friend to go for walks and keep each other accountable. Don't do it alone. If you can exercise with your husband or wife or someone else who really wants to lose that weight then you both can be buddy partners to do this," said Ducharme.

How you look at your goal for the New Year, whether it is losing weight, getting into shape or even giving up a bad habit has a great deal to do with just how successful you will be.

The first step in this mind-over-matter process, according to Ducharme, is to abandon the whole "resolution" idea because it may just be biting off a little too much to chew and sometimes it may just be setting yourself up for failure. A better perspective is to look at what you are trying to do as making some positive lifestyle changes.

"I know it is the same thing as resolutions but a resolution kind of just sounds too final, whereas if I just say that I am going to do something that is really positive and that these are the steps that I am going to take just works out better," said Ducharme.

"This is all part of setting realistic goals. You can't just set yourself up for something that is so far out there that it is just not going to happen because it won't happen. Looking at it as a positive lifestyle change is more realistic and acknowledging that it won't take two weeks of keeping to it is part of it."

For example, trying to lose two pounds per week is a realistic goal as opposed to trying to lose five pounds in a week; which for most people would be too extreme.

As she explained, going at weight loss by starving yourself, going on an extreme diet or engaging in extreme amounts of

exercise and other processes that are not sustainable will result in a weight loss but not weight loss that is sustainable. While you might lose weight in the short term it is only in the short term and that weight will yo-yo back, often with a few extra pounds.

In other words, there is no quick fix and no magic to it, to lose weight it is necessary to eat less and move more.

When it comes to getting the right outlook, Ducharme said that one needs to understand that the goal is to change a bad behaviour into a good behaviour, a process that does not happen overnight.

"I love looking at it as getting healthier because that is a lot more realistic," she observed. "The weight loss will come when you make healthier choices for yourself and then the weight will drop and so let's call it something else."

"Making healthier choices in my life just sounds better whether they are physically, mentally or emotionally. Then you need to look at what the steps are and be very specific about that to see how you are going to reach those goals."

And no matter what the positive life change you are looking to achieve is, breaking it down into daily goals that are easy to achieve instead of looking at it as one giant hill to climb.

For this, Ducharme recommends making a plan, such as scheduling time to exercise each day or writing down what you consume in a food journal. Even though it may just be taking baby steps, you will still be further ahead than where you were the day before.

"So take it slow, be realistic and don't be hard on yourself if you don't exercise or eat right that day. That way it is not a ticket to quit," said Ducharme.

Lastly, and Ducharme stressed this is essential to making a life change – forgiveness is a must! Change can be a very difficult thing and so it is essential to be able to forgive yourself when you backslide.

The way she put it was to imagine your friend or loved one making the same mistake; would you not be inclined to forgive them? And so you should forgive yourself for momentarily failing to reach your goal.

"The best thing to do is, without feeling any guilt because it is such a useless emotion, just start each day as a brand new day," said Ducharme. "Don't look back but instead just stay present and be in the moment and go forward. You can't change the past or what you did the day before but you do have control over the moment and so you have to seize that moment and start from there."



Losing my BFF to suicide

by Anonymous

My best friend wasn't just my BFF; she was my family by blood, my favourite cousin. We were close, close enough to tell secrets.

Lea was the type of girl who loved to have fun without worrying about what other people thought of her. She loved to take long walks with her relatives. She was full of smiles and laughter. She was loved by many people, but she did not see that.

No one understood why she took her life, but I do.

She thought the life she lived was not worth living. She didn't realize that she had to go through a rough time to have a better life when she grew old. She thought no one loved her and didn't realize that if she killed herself all the communities would have sore hearts when they heard the sad news.

I know what was going through her head before she committed suicide; she was bullied by three girls from her same community. I know this because I was also bullied. I was going through a breakup and I drank alcohol the night before I was bullied. I was walking around with a lot of other teenagers and they beat me up. I was drunk and I could not fight back. I thought that life was not good enough to live and that it would be better if I died, I felt so worthless. I thought of killing myself. I thought everyone would be happy without me, I cried myself to sleep for a week. But I did not kill myself because I fought the feeling; I fought my bad thoughts, soberly. I did not turn to alcohol. This was only two weeks before Lea died.

Lea's thoughts were negative, like mine. Lea always moved from home to home, she traveled community to community, and she did not feel the love that she wanted to feel. No place felt like home for her because her parents were not together. And yet Lea had so many friends.

The day I heard the sad news was unforgettable. I was 588 kilometres away in another community for a tournament. I play hockey and I was helping my old teammates from the team I had played with when I was young. I changed teams because the same girls who bullied me were on the team, but they did not feel like a family anymore. That Saturday morning, after the game we played, I decided to have lunch at a restaurant at the arena with my little cousin from the community and with my foster sister.

The whole crowd was staring at me, but I did not care what they were thinking. My mother was scared and kept asking me, "What is wrong? Why are you crying?" I could not answer her, I could not speak. She asked me one last time and I finally replied, "Lea's dead."

My mother wrapped her arms around me and I cried even more. I felt so empty, I was not complete anymore, and my heart was broken. I could not believe she was gone. I lost my cousin, I lost a family member, and I lost my best friend.

"THIS IS HOW WE LOSE OUR LOVED ONES; I LOST MY BEST FRIEND BECAUSE OF VIOLENCE AND ALCOHOL ABUSE. I AM ONE YEAR SOBER, I HAVE FOUGHT MY THOUGHTS WHEN I WANTED TO PUT ALCOHOL INTO MY SYSTEM AND I AM NOW HEALTHY AND I AM HAPPIER THAN I WAS BEFORE WHEN ALCOHOL WAS MY ONLY FRIEND."

Something didn't feel right that morning when I woke up but I had tried to not let it bother me. Then, that afternoon, I received a phone call. The voice sounded so sad, I began to worry, and then the person on the phone told me the news about Lea. I have never felt so heavy in my chest. I was numb everywhere. My arms started to tremble and my phone felt as if it weighed 200 pounds. I was speechless. My foster sister looked at me with her curious eyes.

I felt weak as I got up and ran to search for my mother. I was holding my tears, but as soon as I saw my mother, I ran up the stairs, fell on my knees and I cried on her lap. I hadn't cried that much since my late grandfather passed away.

The next day, we were in the arena dressing room getting ready for the final game. I was dressed but I was not motivated at all because I could not stop thinking about Lea. The same words were running through my head: "Why did she leave? Why did she do this to us? I should not have come; I would have been there for her, why now? I cannot go on without her, why didn't I see her pain?"

My coach came and sat next to me, and said, "You've been staring at the floor for the past 10 minutes, you mind me telling me what is wrong?" I couldn't really hear her but I knew what her question was. I couldn't talk, I was still shocked from yesterday's phone call.

Public Notice

December 27, 2012 Rose Mining Project Federal Funding Available

When she repeated the question a little louder, I looked at her and I wanted to cry. I was holding my tears back as my throat got sore but finally I replied, "My cousin from my community committed suicide." I looked away and I almost couldn't hold my tears anymore till she said, "Well, I am really sorry to hear, you go out there and play hard for your cousin." She gave me a pat on the back and added, "And do not forget to be strong, because you are."

The buzzer sounded and I did not want to play anymore. I just wanted to give up, be alone and cry. But I knew my old teammates missed me out there. I couldn't just walk away and let them down. I put on my helmet, grabbed my gloves and stick, got up and that's when the flashbacks hit, all the good and bad times that Lea and I had shared: the smiles, the laughter, the silly little fights, the sleepovers and all the secrets. I will cherish every moment. I was already at centre ice, not knowing how I got there but I never felt so strong. I felt so motivated to go hard for my team and for my late best friend Lea.

I did not give up when I felt tired. I did not give up when I ran out of breath. I played hard all through the game. I finally gave up when the last buzzer sounded. I felt so tired and I fell on my knees as the pain returned. After the excitement of the finals game, I won the best defense award. Never in my life had I played so hard for someone in my hockey career. As we celebrated our championship, I was on my knees, I looked up towards the ceiling and in my head I said, "Lea, this is for you."

We returned home after our championship game, back to my mother's community where we moved when I was seven years old. When I finally returned home, I found out Lea had been bullied by three girls and that she had turned to alcohol to get through it. She was drunk when she committed suicide.

At that moment I understood why she did it. Getting beat up and kicked in the head turns everything upside down. You think negatively. People and kids need to stop violence, alcohol and drug abuse. Nobody should be left alone when they are hurt, they need to feel the love that they need. Nobody should be left alone when they think negatively about everything.

This is how we lose our loved ones; I lost my best friend because of violence and alcohol abuse. I am one year sober, I have fought my thoughts when I wanted to put alcohol into my system and I am now healthy and I am happier than I was before when alcohol was my only friend.

The Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency is making available \$30,600 to support public participation in the federal environmental assessment of the Rose Mining Project located approximately 38 km north of Nemiscau, in Québec.

This funding will support participation in upcoming steps of the environmental assessment such as consultation related to the Environmental Impact Statement and consultation on the draft Environmental Assessment Report.

To apply for funding or for more information on the project and the environmental assessment process, visit the Agency's website at www.ceaa-acee.gc.ca (registry reference number 80005) or contact the Participant Funding Program by writing to PFP.PAFTP@ceaa-acee.gc.ca or by calling 1-866-582-1884.

Applications received by January 28, 2013 will be considered. Funding recipients will be announced later.

As part of the strengthened and modernized *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act*, 2012 (CEAA 2012) put in place to support the government's Responsible Resource Development Initiative, the Agency is conducting a federal environmental assessment of this project.

Critical Elements Corporation is proposing the construction, operation and decommissioning of an open pit tantalum and lithium mine located approximately 38 km north of Nemiscau, in Québec. As proposed, the project includes the operation of an open pit, possibly followed by underground mining, waste and tailings impoundment area, an industrial ore processing facility and the option of transforming concentrate off-site. The mine would produce about 4500 tonnes of ore per day over a 17-year life span.



This project is being assessed using a science based approach. If the project is permitted to proceed to the next phase, it will continue to be subject to Canada's strong environmental laws, rigorous enforcement and follow-up and increased fines.

The Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency administers the federal environmental assessment process, which identifies the environmental effects of proposed projects and measures to address those effects, in support of sustainable development.

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UNDER THE NORTHERN SKY

Hunger strikes have a powerful history

by Xavier Kataquapit

Over the years, leaders from northern First Nation communities like Attawapiskat have fought hard for many of the basic services and programs that most people in Canada take for granted. However, I can understand my peoples' frustration when it feels like progress is being reversed and we are losing what little we gained. Many difficult issues plague our Native communities: including chronic health problems, unemployment, addictions, violence and suicide. The sad truth is these issues are actually a small part of a larger story across Canada; one in which many Native communities are fighting for proper water services, education, jobs, health services and decent housing.

A month ago, Attawapiskat First Nation Chief Theresa Spence decided to draw attention to these issues by taking part in a hunger strike in Ottawa. I can understand her reasons for resorting to such a drastic measure to shine a spotlight on the plight of our people. When First Nation leaders are not consulted on legislation that affects our treaty rights, for example, then we are being ignored.

I know from experience that life in a remote Native community is not easy. From the moment a Native child in Canada is born, they will more than likely to experience poor nutrition, few medical resources, trouble achieving a proper long-term education and fewer chances for meaningful employment.

Our First Nation leaders continually fight for basic rights that were agreed upon when our people and the government signed treaties a hundred years ago. We honoured our part of the bargain by giving up just about everything: our land, our spiritual freedoms, our heritage, our language and our right to govern ourselves. The deplorable situation of many First Nations across Canada is only a symptom of how the government has failed to deliver its part of the bargain. Chief Spence is merely calling to attention the plight of our people.

It is sad to see our leaders having to address First Nation issues in this way. When government systems have broken down and a leader can no longer meaningfully negotiate, communicate or address important issues, they are driven to alternative solutions. I am concerned for the health of Chief Spence but we should not forget that her situation represents only a small part of the overall pain and suffering that our people have endured.

Hunger strikes have historically played a significant role in the struggle for freedom and justice. For centuries, many

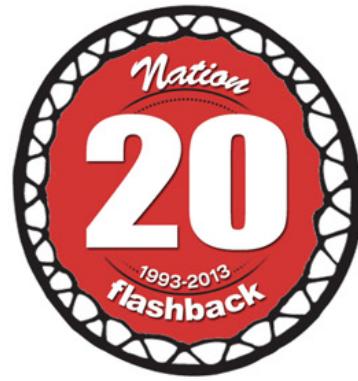
brave activists have held non-violent hunger strikes. Mahatma Gandhi was a famous example in India when he engaged in several hunger strikes to protest British rule. This helped lead to freedom for India. British and American suffragettes very effectively used hunger strikes to win women's rights, including the right to vote and run for office. Nelson Mandela also used hunger strikes to protest apartheid in South Africa.

There is a lot of support for Chief Spence across Canada and internationally under the umbrella of the Idle No More movement. But it is sad to see the criticism and racism that has appeared against her and Native people in general through anonymous posts and comments on many news sites. Many of these racist posts more than likely come from political parties trying to attack First Nation people and discredit them. However, there are also lots of people are willing to say terrible, vicious and racist things about Natives and that saddens me.

I believe that media corporations share responsibility for these negative and sometimes violent comments appearing on their websites. It is one thing for an individual to voice their view publicly or anonymously. This is a right we all share in a free country. However, public viewpoints take on a whole new light when a group of people is allowed to anonymously voice their hate in a public forum. A website administrator should be capable of filtering or channeling the comments on a website under their control but this is not happening. If a major news corporation allows so many negative, hateful and racist comments on their site, it means that they are sharing in the negative viewpoint.

As individuals we have the right to stand up and demand that hate should not be spread in any media. Public inaction can lead to negative results. Edmund Burke, an 18th-century philosopher and political figure, described inaction as, "All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing." Simon Wiesenthal, a Second World War Holocaust survivor, explained that, "For evil to flourish, it only requires good men to do nothing."

You might not agree with First Nation leadership and Chief Spence's campaign, but resorting to hate and stereotype slander is not only wrong but also illegal. I hope that Chief Spence accomplishes her goals. I also want to remind her of the words an old warrior told me a few years ago, "It is important to live so that you can fight another day."



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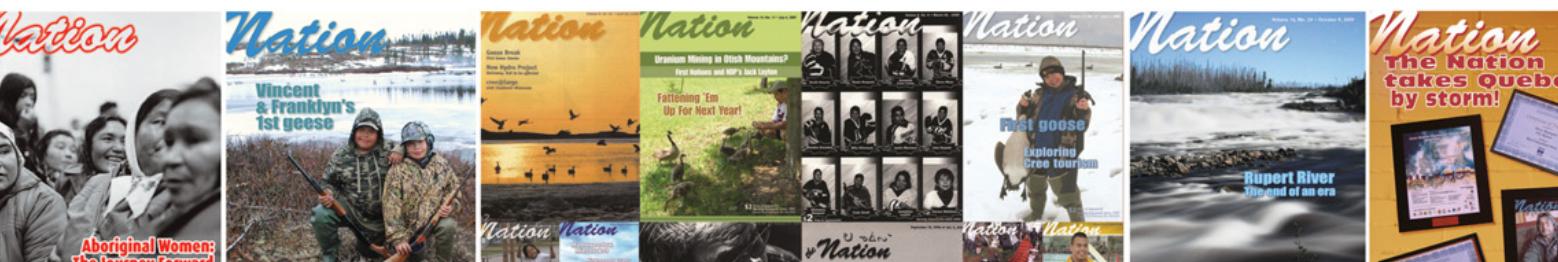
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